

Conservation Security Program

Wildlife Assessment



Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

Minnesota, 2006

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide a method for you to assess your Agricultural Operation for farmland wildlife habitat typical of your watershed. These questions help determine whether your entire Agricultural Operation meets the minimum CSP farmland wildlife requirements for Tier III. This assessment will also be used to assess wildlife as the third resource concern as required by enrollment in Tier II.

Directions: Read and answer each question by checking **Yes** or **No**. If an identified habitat type or component is not present on the operation, answer **N/A**. A **NO** answer indicates that your Agricultural Operation may not meet the minimum farmland wildlife criteria for enrollment in Tier III.

A. Cropland – all fields in the offer		
Do you plan to enroll cropland in CSP? <i>This includes land in row crops or close-sown crops, horticultural cropland, orchards and vineyards.</i>	YES	N/A (proceed to section B.)
1. Does your crop rotation or residue management fall into one of the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fall tillage, residues undisturbed; Conservation tillage with >30% over-winter residue cover; Conservation tillage with <30% over-winter residue cover and <i>at least</i> 2 acres of un-harvested grain per 80 acres of cropland. The un-harvested grain must be located adjacent to existing grass, wetland or woody cover; and/or Close sown legumes (alfalfa, clover etc.) in rotation (minimum 3 years). AND, 	YES	NO
2. For each field, is 50% or more of the crop field within ¼ mile (1320') of escape/concealment cover that is at least 30' wide (grass, woodland, hedge row, windbreaks, wetlands etc)? AND,	YES	NO
3. If present, are non-cropped wetland inclusions buffered by permanent vegetation at least 60' wide? AND,	YES	NO
4. Is 5% of your agricultural operation maintained in grass, shrubs, woodland and/or wetlands? These areas MUST be left undisturbed until July 1 each year. <i>For example, if you enroll 100 acres in CSP you must have 5 acres of grass, shrubs, woodland and/or wetlands that is left undisturbed until July 1.</i>	YES	NO
B. Hayland – Contiguous hay field(s) greater than 10 acres in size, including forage crops in a rotation with row or close-sown crops, and permanent hay land.		
Do you plan to enroll hayland in CSP? <i>This includes forage crops in a rotation with row or close-sown crops, and permanent hay land.</i>	YES	N/A (proceed to section C.)
1. Is one or more of the following actions part of your hayland management? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mowed after July 1 Mowed prior to July 1 with at least one of the following considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave a minimum stubble height of 6 inches across entire field; or Leave un-mown strips/blocks comprising at least 10% of the <u>total hay land acreage</u>. The strips/blocks must be at least 60 feet wide. Is 5% of your agricultural operation maintained in grass, shrubs, woodland and/or wetlands? These areas MUST be left undisturbed until July 1 each year. <i>For example, if you enroll 100 acres in CSP you must have 5 acres of grass, shrubs, woodland and/or wetlands that is left undisturbed until July 1.</i> 	YES	NO
2. State and locally listed noxious weeds are absent or rare.	YES	NO

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C. Undrained Temporary – Seasonal – Semi permanent Wetlands Occurring Outside of Cropland Fields (See Appendix A)

Does your agricultural operation include wetlands located on non-cropland areas, such as grassland or woodland?	YES	N/A (proceed to section D.)
1. Are the wetlands left undisturbed or protected from unmanaged grazing and fire, as applicable?	YES	NO
2. Are the wetlands buffered by permanent vegetation averaging at least 60 feet wide?	YES	NO
3. State and locally listed noxious weeds are absent or rare.	YES	NO

D. Permanent Grassland Habitat – all grassland fields present on the offer. (See Appendix B)

Does your agricultural operation include permanent grassland habitat? <i>This includes pasture, odd areas, ditch banks, RIM/CRP, conservation practices and/or other permanent grassland.</i>	YES	N/A (proceed to section E.)
1. On average, are the identified grass areas at least 60 feet wide? OR is 5% of your agricultural operation maintained in grass, shrubs, woodland and/or wetlands? These areas MUST be left undisturbed until July 1 each year. <i>For example, if you enroll 100 acres in CSP you must have 5 acres of grass, shrubs, woodland and/or wetlands that is left undisturbed until July 1.</i>	YES	NO
2. Is one or more of the following actions part of your management plan? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undisturbed or managed according to a wildlife management plan. >50% of the grass cover is maintained above 6" in height, or If grazed to <6", is grazing prohibited on at least 10 acres until July 15. 	YES	NO
3. Does each identified grass area consist of one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed native grasses and broadleaved plants. Mixed introduced grasses with broadleaved plants and/or legumes. 	YES	NO
4. State and locally listed noxious weeds are absent or rare.	YES	NO

E. Forestland greater than 5.0 acres and all Forest Riparian Habitat

Does your agricultural operation include forestland habitat? <i>This includes small woodlots, wooded odd areas, farmstead shelterbelts and/or stream or drainage corridors.</i>	YES	N/A (proceed to signature block)
1. Do the wooded riparian zones average greater than 75 feet wide on each side?	YES	NO
2. Are livestock excluded from the woodland?	YES	NO
3. Is the stand comprised of at least 4 native tree species (at least one of which is a native hardwood) of differing size classes?	YES	NO
4. Are there at least 2 dead or dying trees per acre of woodland?	YES	NO
5. Is the ground cover comprised predominantly of native shrubs, grasses and/or broadleaved plants versus sparse vegetation?	YES	NO
6. State and locally listed noxious weeds are absent or rare.	YES	NO

I have reviewed and understand the minimum pasture eligibility requirements and I certify that I meet all requirements on the offered fields. I understand that at any point in time I may be asked to provide the above records for verification purposes.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

DATE

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Appendix A – Farmland Wildlife Habitat Assessment

Temporary – Wet Meadow

- Saturated or nearly saturated during most of the growing season.
- Usually without standing water during most of the growing season, but waterlogged within a few inches of the surface.
- Typical Vegetation – Reed Canarygrass, Timothy, sedges, rushes, goldenrod, sunflower, smartweeds, barnyard grass.
- NWI Symbol: PEMB



Seasonal – Shallow Marsh

- Usually waterlogged early during the growing season.
- Often covered with up to 6 inches of water.
- Typical Vegetation – Cattail, bulrush, bur-reed, duckweed.
- Often called “potholes”.
- NWI Symbol: PEMC



Seasonal – Shrub Swamp

- Usually waterlogged during the growing season.
- Often covered with as much as 6 inches of water.
- Typical Vegetation – Alder, willow, dogwood, elderberry, ferns, sedges.
- NWI Symbols: PSSA, C,F



Semi-permanent – Deep Marsh

- Usually inundated with water.
- Usually covered with 6 inches to 3 feet of water during the growing season.
- Typical Vegetation – Cattail, bulrush, water-lily, pondweeds.
- NWI Symbols: PEMF, PEMG



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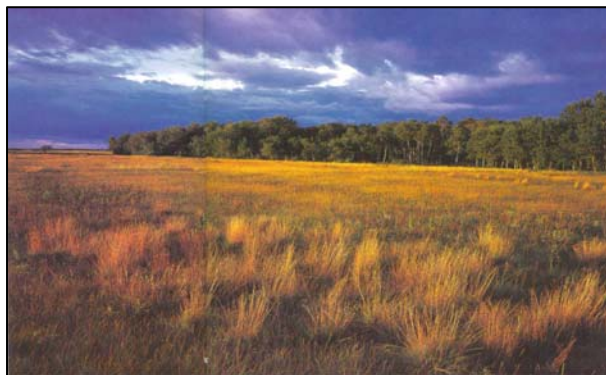
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Appendix B: Examples of permanent grassland habitat



Long-term set aside lands such as Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Re-Invest in Minnesota (RIM) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) etc.



Cropland field borders.



Grass filter strips and buffers.



Drainage ditch banks.



Pasture land.



Grassed back terraces.

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Streambank and shoreline areas.



Old fields, idle cropland and other grassland cover.



Grassed Waterways.

Noxious Plants of Minnesota

The following is a list of State Prohibited noxious weeds. Individual counties may have a “county prohibited” list. Refer to your county weed inspector for additional local information.

Field Bindweed	Perennial Sowthistle
Hemp	Bull Thistle
Purple Loosestrife	Canada Thistle
Garlic Mustard	Musk Thistle
Poison Ivy	Plumeless Thistle
Leafy Spurge	